

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the recitations of claim 2 therein, and claim 2 has been canceled accordingly.

Since the Examiner indicated in paragraph 3 on page 4 of the Office Action that claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, Applicants submit that the above amendment (which makes claim 1 equivalent to claim 2 rewritten in independent form) places the application in condition for allowance, and thus entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

Obviousness Rejection

On page 2 of the Office Action, in paragraph 2, claims 1 and 3-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Arai et al (6,017,672).

In response, and to expedite allowance, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the recitations of claim 2, which was not included in this rejection. Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended claim 1 and dependent claims 3-18 are not obvious over Arai et al, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Objection to Claims 2 and 19

On page 4 of the Office Action, in paragraph 3, the Examiner has objected to claims 2 and 19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but has indicated that they would be

allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 2 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Based on the Examiner's indication, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the recitations of claim 2, such that amended claim 1 corresponds to claim 2 rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (there are no intervening claims). In view of the amendment of claim 1, claim 2 has been canceled, thereby obviating the objection to claim 2. With respect to claim 19, Applicants note that claim 19 is an independent claim, so this claim should be indicated as allowed without any amendment being needed.

Based on the above, Applicants submit that the objection to claims 2 and 19 has been overcome, and withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 10/773,366

Attorney Docket No. Q79755

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

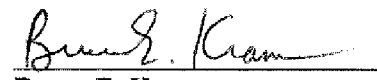
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER


Bruce E. Kramer
Registration No. 33,725

Date: June 27, 2007